

SPIELMAN

The Germans as Others see Them .

THE GERMANS

AS OTHERS SEE THEM

An Open Letter to
Herr Maximilian Harden

FROM

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AN OPEN LETTER TO
HERR MAXIMILIAN HARDEN.

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SIR,—Judged by your writings, you appear to be one of the few sane men now in Germany and the only sober and independent Editor of a newspaper. There were one or two besides who wrote and who told the German people a part of the truth, but they have seemingly been silenced by your Government and have disappeared. The Authorities have tried suppressing your paper *Die Zukunft* and are, I understand, again endeavouring to silence you. If they do not deprive you of your liberty you would possibly earn the gratitude of future generations were you able to wash from the eyes of your countrymen some more of the dust which your Government has thrown into them in dense clouds since it made war upon the world. Here are further points which I would suggest your bringing to their notice, some of which you have overlooked.

WHO MADE THE WAR ?

With the object of shielding themselves from their everlasting disgrace and awful responsibility, your Kaiser and Government have told your people that the Allies caused the war and forced it upon peaceful Germany. This, as you well know, is without foundation, and your people should be told so. It is disproved by the known facts.

Germany was the only country in Europe that was fully prepared for war in August, 1914. It had taken her forty-four years to prepare for it—ever since her successful war in 1870, and she was ready for it in 1914. Your Kaiser was for ever boasting that he had kept the peace for forty years, but as the world now knows he kept it only until he was fully prepared for the biggest of all conflagrations, and for what he and his friends thought would be a short and a victorious expedition. How were the Allies situated in comparison with Germany's preparedness for war ? They were one and all absolutely unprepared for it—France, Russia, Great Britain and Belgium, the four countries to be first involved. Is it likely on the face of it that four totally unprepared countries would pick a quarrel with Germany, who was, and whom they knew to be, armed to the teeth and fully prepared, and likely, and probably eager, to crush in battle any combination against her ?

Knowing her own superiority in this respect and craving for war, it was not surprising that Germany thwarted all the efforts made to preserve peace by England, France, and Russia.

Consequently Germany made war upon Russia with indecent haste for fear of losing so good a chance. She did so on the flimsy pretext that Russia was about to mobilise her forces against Austria. You should make it clear, Herr Harden, to your people that Germany is not entitled to the monopoly of self-protection. You should also remind them that every German—man, woman and child—was in favour of war and, indeed, encouraged by their Kaiser, was hungry for it. They received it with enthusiasm. Like their Potsdam rulers, they thought they would make a good cash profit out of it and secure Colonies at the expense of France. Your people have forgotten this. They thought they would repeat their former military achievements in war, and their Kaiser, like many a Hohenzollern before him, thought he could earn imperishable glory by further successes for himself and plunder for the Fatherland.

GERMANY'S INTOXICATION.

The fact is this. The military successes of the Prussians in 1864 and 1866 and of the Germans in 1871 intoxicated them and they have not been sober since. Owing to her complete preparedness, therefore, Germany was able, upon her declaration of war, to overrun Belgium and Northern France as well as a part of Poland very rapidly and before she could be stopped. But, as you will have observed, she did *not* get through to Paris

You and the Minority Socialists alone appear to be fairly sober now, and the rest of the German people are unconsciously in process of becoming so—by adversity. By the time the war is ended

the process will doubtless be completed. Your people should be made to understand that they must abandon their claim to rule the world, and that they are in very many respects actually the inferiors of the people of other nations whom they seek to rule. The unbounded arrogance of your compatriots is no doubt the fault of your megalomaniacal Kaiser, who for years has been shouting from the housetops: "We Germans are the salt of the earth!"

Believing, as they do, what they are ordered to believe, your fellow-countrymen with blind and sheepish obedience think therefore they *are* the salt of the earth and the "chosen people" of modern times. But belief in this imaginary superiority will have to be knocked out of them before their sobriety can be completed. Other nations laugh at your contention.

How can your Kaiser, who has, as you know, and as all the world knows, a unique and vulgar appetite for self-advertisement, reconcile his assumed peace-loving tendencies with his everlasting references to the "Mailed Fist" of Germany, to his "Destructive Sword," and to himself as the "Knight in Shining Armour"? Is this the talk of a man of peace? He poses as the Angel of Peace while behaving as the Bully of Europe.

From their cradles your people have been weaned and trained in military discipline. They have, as I say, to do and believe what they are ordered to do and believe. Everything else is *Streng Verboten!* They are taught that their highest aim in life is to be able to fight and kill,

and they have been so instructed for generations. This teaching is peculiar to Germany. Other nations regard the killing of their fellow-men with horror, but Germans are taught to glory in it, and the Kaiser himself, supported by his military entourage and the professors and the clergy, encourages it.

WHY should the nations of the world tremble when your Kaiser is graciously pleased to frown ?

WHY should the people of other countries hold their breath when your War-Lord is graciously pleased to rattle his sword ?

WHY, at the bidding of **one man**—your War-Lord—should the people of the world be slaughtered in their millions ?

But why ask questions of people who are still too intoxicated with former military successes to answer them ? And why attempt to argue with a people who at present understand only brute force, treacherous scheming, and brutal language ? It is perhaps unnecessary because they are now receiving the like in large measure and will continue to receive them until they once more become a sober people. At present you are regarded as a "swelled-headed" nation. You speak of your "incomparable Kultur" as a virtue to be imitated by others ; but the other nations of the earth ridicule your claims. You speak of your "incomparable troops," yet the British alone have captured far more of those "incomparable troops" than you have captured of theirs.

GERMAN CRUELTY.

It is far from my intention, Herr Harden, merely to abuse your people, but have they ever con-

sidered **why** they are so despised? Encourage them to try, at least, to see themselves **as others see them**. They are generally hated because of their brazen conceit, their unbounded deceit, and their brutal nature. Their cruelties in this war have seldom been surpassed by even the most savage tribes, and have revived for the German people the ancient name of "Huns"—which the Kaiser once with barbarous passion claimed himself—a name that will stick to them for all time.

They have invented fighting with the assistance of poisoned gases and "flame-throwing"—cruel and cowardly weapons.

They have poisoned wells, as did the savages of old.

They have dropped high explosives on civilians—men, women, and babes—in open towns. They have declared open towns "fortresses," and treated them accordingly, merely because anti-aircraft guns have been set up for their protection.

They have deported men, women, and girls from Belgium and France and enslaved them, forcing them by starvation to work for their enemies.

They have sunk non-combatant ships, and have destroyed their crews "without a trace."

They have sunk even hospital ships under a variety of the meanest pretexts, and drowned defenceless wounded soldiers, Red Cross nurses, and doctors.

They have fired on crews struggling in the water.

They have needlessly ruined lands in their retreats.

They have treated prisoners of war with cowardly brutality heretofore unknown.

When Germany contemplates some fresh barbarity she usually seeks to excuse herself for it in advance by charging her foes with similar crimes—a wicked, mendacious perversion of the facts. As an excuse for her unheard-of barbarities, your Government has frequently stated also that these are in retaliation for Great Britain's blockade of the German coast. This excuse does not hold good for a moment. The blockade of enemy territory is legitimate and is allowed by the Hague Convention. Why should we help to supply your Army with food and with other necessities? Why does your Government not try to break our blockade instead of keeping your fleet locked up in your harbours? You know the reason, Herr Harden, and you also know that it pays you better to clamour for "the freedom of the seas," which in times of peace you already enjoy. Do the Germans claim the monopoly of blockades also?

Did not the Germans themselves blockade Paris in 1870, and did not Bismarck say of the French, "Let them stew in their own juice"—a characteristically German saying which has become historical? No. The German complaint of the British blockade is merely another peg upon which to hang "frightfulness," and is invented to justify, as they think, their ruthless and predetermined submarine campaign.

Therefore, because Great Britain has justifiably blockaded German ports, Germany pretends to consider herself justified, as a reprisal, in sinking hospital and passenger ships carrying civilians.* In this way she sank, among other ships, the *Lusitania*, and drowned over one thousand innocent men, women, and children, including over a hundred Americans—at a time when America was not at war with Germany and was not likely to be. Your pretence was that the *Lusitania* was carrying contraband of war. Why, therefore, did you not exercise your undoubted “right of search,” when, if your suspicions were justified, you might have followed the humane precepts of International Law with regard to the ship and the passengers? But your High Command preferred the opportunity of indulging the German lust for slaughter. For this cold-blooded, murderous outrage the Iron Cross was conferred upon the commander of the U-boat by the German Attila, and a medal was actually struck to celebrate this truly German “victory.”

That medal Germany will one day wish to withdraw and suppress, to hide her shame; but it is too late. It will perpetuate for all time, among astonished generations of the future, one of the wickedest, vilest, and most indefensible deeds in the world's history.

“NECESSITY KNOWS NO LAW.”

With Germany “Necessity knows no law” and Justice does not count. Truth, Mercy,

* On February 18th, 1915, six months after the declaration of war, Germany commenced her submarine blockade of the British Isles. Great Britain established the blockade of Germany a fortnight later in retaliation. Germany thereupon inverts these facts and pretends that the sinking of the *Lusitania* and their submarine campaign generally is a reprisal for our blockade.

and Honour are, in German eyes, virtues to be practised by other nations, but need not apply to Germany, simply because Germany is GERMANY.

By the whole outside world, Herr Harden, Germans are now regarded as specialists in crime and experts in cruelty. You would do well to explain this to your people.

In this war the Germans—particularly the Prussians—have shown no mercy or chivalry whatever. On the contrary, “they have behaved like brutes, committing abominations of cruelty, whining when their own skins are in danger, and lying with impudent effrontery when their crimes have been brought home.” [Most of these abominations of cruelty are committed by men wearing a military uniform bearing the Prussian motto, “Gott mit uns” !] They are brutal to their prisoners, but cringe when they themselves are captured. Coming fresh from killing women and children in an open town in England, the crew of a Zeppelin, having got into difficulties in the North Sea, and with their hands still wet with the blood of their English victims, were not above whining to the skipper of an English fishing smack, imploring him to save them.

Of all the wickedness perpetrated by Germany in connection with this war, the *Lusitania* crime and your country's treatment of Belgium overshadow all else. With the object of getting your forces most quickly to Paris at the outbreak of war your Government had perfidiously planned to march them through Belgium—little dreaming of that country's opposition. Not Goliath suspected less the sublime heroism of David. This Belgium your

Government had undertaken to protect, and had appended its signature to the document proclaiming her Independence ; but as " German necessity knows no law," your Government, without an instant's compunction, tore up that agreement in August, 1914, and, instead of protecting Belgium as a guardian would protect his ward, you proceeded to strangle and despoil her. Furthermore, your cruelties and your treatment of her inhabitants have branded your people as super-traitors—as outlaws among the nations ; and the name of Germany will never again be heard in Belgium—or out of it—without a shudder.

Your shame in relation to that country will never be lived down. History has already recorded it in letters of fire.

GERMAN HATE.

When, at the outset of hostilities, Germany found—to her astonishment—that Great Britain joined France and Russia in resisting German aggression, thereby upsetting German calculations, the anger and hate of your Kaiser and his Government knew no bounds. Your people were commanded to hate the English—" their chief enemy "—and accordingly they proceeded to hate them with a bitter hatred. To save themselves, as they hoped, from the reproach of responsibility for the war, your War-Lord and his Ministers attempted to shift the blame for it upon the English if they could—and desperate were the efforts made and encouraged to this end. Popular " Hymns of Hate " were composed and sung everywhere, and the author of the chief " Hymn of Hate " received the Order of the Red

Eagle from the Kaiser, to the astonishment and amusement of the outside world ; but the most tickled and delighted of all were the English themselves. We do not fear German hate any more than we fear German guns. Yet we quite understand that you cannot love us for joining the countries against you and for exposing the German conspiracy to wage this world-war : for the practice of honour, about which your Government glibly prates, it has really no comprehension of at all. And now we find that the famous German hate has since been somewhat shifted from England—first to Italy, then to Roumania, and it seems now to rest upon the United States of America, the last to declare war upon you. It is well known that the Kaiser and Crown Prince have long fostered the doctrine of hate of England in Germany in preparation for “ The Day.”

But Germany must not claim a monopoly in the matter of hate either, for you may rest assured that your hate of us is fully reciprocated. Other nations unite with us in expressing the fervent hope that your hate will last beyond the limit of the war, and that you will show it in a practical way by retaining in Germany your commercial agents, your clerks, your “ tourists,” your waiters and your barbers. England and other countries in Europe will endeavour to do without them, and will probably succeed. We all sincerely hope that your hate will take this practical form.

“ BURNING INDIGNATION AND HOLY WRATH.”

Next to your Hate, you have been conspicuous in your expressions of fury and rage. “ Burning

Indignation and Holy Wrath" have been expressed very loudly by your War-Lord because the Allies would not grasp his blood-stained hand when he had the graceless impudence to offer it! As you know, only the failure of the wicked war which he declared upon the world prompted him to offer peace. Why should the Kaiser be allowed to make war when he chooses and have peace when *he* needs it? Why?

Retribution is now at his heels: wherefore he is trying to get the best peace he can before tribulation is upon him. He may think that his throne is in danger, who can tell? But for his "Burning Indignation and Holy Wrath" the Allies care no more than they do for his Hate or for his "incomparable soldiers." When the British people heard of the Kaiser's Holy Wrath message the sole remark was "How German!" An angry Prussian is a psychological study—a curiosity, a puzzle—but always an absurdity.

GERMANY'S ENEMIES.

Your Kaiser and your Government now frequently refer to your having "a world of enemies," but have your people ever asked themselves why this is so? Why, in addition to England, France, Russia, Belgium, and Serbia—the first to face you—should you now have arrayed against you the United States of America, Italy, Japan, Montenegro, Albania, Portugal, Roumania, Cuba, Panama, Greece and Siam? And why have the further countries—China, Brazil, Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Liberia, Hayti, and San Domingo—severed diplomatic relations with you?

If they reply that it is because all these 25 nations are jealous of Cain-branded Germany and of your despised "Kultur," they know they are avoiding the issue. The answer is because they, one and all, desire that Right shall triumph over Might.

Why did Italy, your former Ally, desert you? Because Italy knew of your criminal intentions as far back as 1913. The particulars of the plot have since been disclosed by Signor Giolitti, who would be no party to it.

Your people cannot be quite such fools as to believe that all these countries really acted at the bidding of Great Britain and because they are all jealous of German Virtues and German "Kultur."

And why does the whole world distrust you and suspect you? Why will no country trust the German word again? Because you do not respect your solemn engagements when it suits your purpose to break them, and because you have brought your diplomacy to the lowest level of trickery and deceit as inculcated by Bismarck and his disciples.

Your endeavour to Prussianise the world has failed because your world-war has failed, thanks to the all-wise and all-merciful God, and the world will not be set back.

You have failed in your Colonies, all of which you have now lost. You have failed in Alsace-Lorraine, where you have persecuted the people since 1870; and you have failed in Poland, where you have persecuted the people since 1793,

including my own Poland-born ancestors, even forbidding them to use their Polish language and forcing upon them German names.

GERMANY'S "INCOMPARABLE" BLUNDERS.

In warfare all countries make mistakes. England has made many military mistakes, as well as mistakes of policy. But of the countries engaged in this world-war Germany has made the most numerous by far and the most serious, in fact she has made "incomparable mistakes." Here are a few :—

1. She thought that Belgium would quietly submit to the violation of her territory for a cash consideration—for that is Germany's estimate of national honour, at least in a small, tyrant-threatened country; but heroic little Belgium astonished her, as she extorted the admiration of the world, by defending her soil and by successfully holding back the German Imperial Army for the space of three weeks, thereby giving time to France and Great Britain to block the way to Paris and Calais.
2. She thought England would remain neutral, but England astonished her by joining the Alliance against her.
3. She thought England had but "a contemptible little army," but England again astonished her by her Conscription and by raising millions of men.
4. She thought England's Colonies would rise in revolt, but they also astonished her by

sending hundreds of thousands of troops to assist the Mother Country. Even General Smuts and his soldiers, who fought against us recently in the Boer War, have astonished your military rulers by fighting on our side.

5. She thought Italy, her former ally, would fight with her, but Italy too has astonished her by joining her enemies.
6. She thought Greece would at least remain neutral, but she has at last astonished you by throwing in her lot with the Allies.
7. She thought the United States could be fooled and bullied and then made use of for peace negotiations, but she has found to her astonishment that her conduct has estranged America and made another and a very important enemy.
8. She thought the other countries of the world would be terrorised into silence by her U-boat frightfulness, but they have, much to her surprise, either severed relations or have declared war against her.
9. She thought her fiendish conduct in Belgium, upon the high seas and battlefields and in open towns, would be another object-lesson of her tyranny to the world ; but it has only embittered the world against her, while it has covered her with everlasting shame.
10. She thought she could starve out England, but has to realise that she has failed.

II. She thought she could have peace merely by suggesting it ; that she could detach the Allies, especially Russia, from their allegiance ; that she could, by intrigue and cunning, promote Conferences to further her own ends. She has signally failed in all.

If your people think that all will be forgotten and forgiven as far as they are concerned when the war is over, tell them they are grievously mistaken. They will most assuredly reap the punishment which their rulers have brought upon them. Your Government seems to think it will live on friendly terms henceforward with its neighbours as it now professes to wish to do ! On what kind of " neighbourly terms " has Germany lived with France during the last forty years, bullying her and browbeating her upon every possible occasion ?

I know that you do not personally agree with the Kaiser that he is a Heaven-sent Messenger, but too many of your people appear to accept his blasphemous assurance.

You should enlighten them on this point, Herr Harden, and inform them that the rest of the world regard him as lately the most dangerous and, now, the most discredited man in Europe, and think his pretensions to " Divine Right " a ridiculous and impudent anachronism—the stagy pose of Imperial Mediævalism.

Until the German people—especially the Prussians—show themselves to be a chastened people, understanding the difference between right and wrong and living up to it ; until they understand that Honour and Truth, Mercy and

Justice, are virtues to be practised by Germans as well as by the other nations of the world, they will have to live henceforth as the most despised people on God's earth.

They have conducted this war as savages would hesitate to do ; and as savages will they be regarded for generations to come, and other countries will ostracise them. Their crimes will neither be forgotten nor forgiven.

And how does Germany stand at the commencement of this fourth year of her war ?

British and French Armies are now beating back the German " unconquerable troops " on the Western Front.

Germany, the greatest military power in the world, is relying no longer upon her Armies, but upon Submarines for ultimate success.

Germany is putting up her despised Socialists to save her by intrigue and trickery or by Peace Conferences.

The Allies find your new Chancellor, Dr. Michaelis, behaving like a detected criminal : even now he is being baited for not being criminal enough. He knows that Germany has been found out, and would willingly seek peace were it not for the sudden but temporary collapse of Russia. So Herr Doctor is sitting on the fence for the moment to see how things go on the Eastern Front. He hopes that if he can persuade Russia by a few hard blows, accompanied by low Bismarckian trickery, he may be able to conclude what he calls " an honourable peace " with her.

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It is rumoured, Herr Harden, that your High Command on the Eastern front has sent thousands of Russian prisoners back into Russia as trained German agents to sow the seeds of insubordination among their comrades, and that the traitors in the Russian Army are largely due to this dishonourable conduct, which has enabled the Kaiser to proclaim "brilliant Victories" due to his infallible and "incomparable troops"; but all the world knows they are bought by this use of treason.

Dr. Michaelis will probably fail in his "honourable peace" efforts with Russia, but should he succeed it would avail Germany nothing. The end will be the same—the defeat of Prussian Militarism for the benefit of the world.

You are aware that people are being told by your Government that the object of the Allies is to destroy Germany; but you know that statement to be untrue. The Allies are endeavouring to break Germany's "Destructive Sword," and to silence the "Knight in Shining Armour." This is the meaning of the War. And this, by the Justice of God, they will accomplish.

Yours, &c.,

ISIDORE SPIELMANN.

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